

THE ANALYSIS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN ROMANIA

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Abstract. The study analyzes the evolution of agricultural production in Romania during the period 1990–2023, highlighting the main structural transformations in the crop and livestock sectors. The study is based on official statistical data and tracks the dynamics of cultivated areas, total and average production per hectare, as well as the evolution of livestock. The results indicate a general trend of reducing cultivated areas, concomitant with an increase in the importance of oilseed crops and a sharp volatility of cereal production, mainly influenced by climatic factors. The livestock sector is characterized by a significant decline in livestock, which affects the structural balance of Romanian agriculture. These developments highlight the need to strengthen agri-food chains and increase value added in domestic agricultural production. The conclusions emphasize the need for technological modernization, increased specialization and the development of coherent agricultural policies, capable of reducing existing vulnerabilities and supporting the competitiveness of the agri-food sector. It also highlights the persistence of structural disparities between the different agricultural subsectors, which influence the overall performance of Romanian agriculture.

Keywords: agricultural production, crop sector, livestock sector, rural development

• Introduction

Agriculture has a strategic role in Romania's economy, by contributing to food security, rural development and exports. After 1990, the sector went through a complex transition process, marked by the restructuring of land ownership, the fragmentation of farms and the decrease in economic efficiency. Accession to the European Union in 2007 created access to new funds and standards, but structural vulnerabilities persisted. The paper aims to identify the main trends and imbalances in the plant and livestock sector.

• Material and method

The analysis carried out in this paper is based on official statistical data provided by the National Institute of Statistics, especially from the Statistical Yearbook of Romania (Time Series 2020 and 2024). The analyzed indicators are: the agricultural area cultivated with the main crops, total agricultural productions, average yields per hectare, livestock and the structure of agricultural production, and the analyzed period is between 1990–2023. The methods used are: descriptive, comparative, dynamic analysis and causal interpretation of statistical developments.

• Results and discussions

➤ Plant production sector

The vegetable sector indicates a general decrease in cultivated areas, but also a repositioning towards more profitable crops, especially oilseeds. Grain production remains dominant, but fluctuates strongly from year to year, reflecting the high dependence on climatic conditions. In 2023, maize and sorghum production declined considerably from the 2019 peak, while wheat and rye remained at a relatively high level.

➤ Animal production sector

The livestock sector is characterized by a sharp decline in herds. In 2023, cattle accounted for only 29.0% of the 1990 level, and pigs about 27.0%. Sheep had a partial recovery after 2004, and goats exceeded the level of 1990. The decline of horses reflects the mechanization of agriculture and socio-economic transformations in rural areas. Reduction in herds weakens the balance between crop and animal production and can increase dependence on imports.

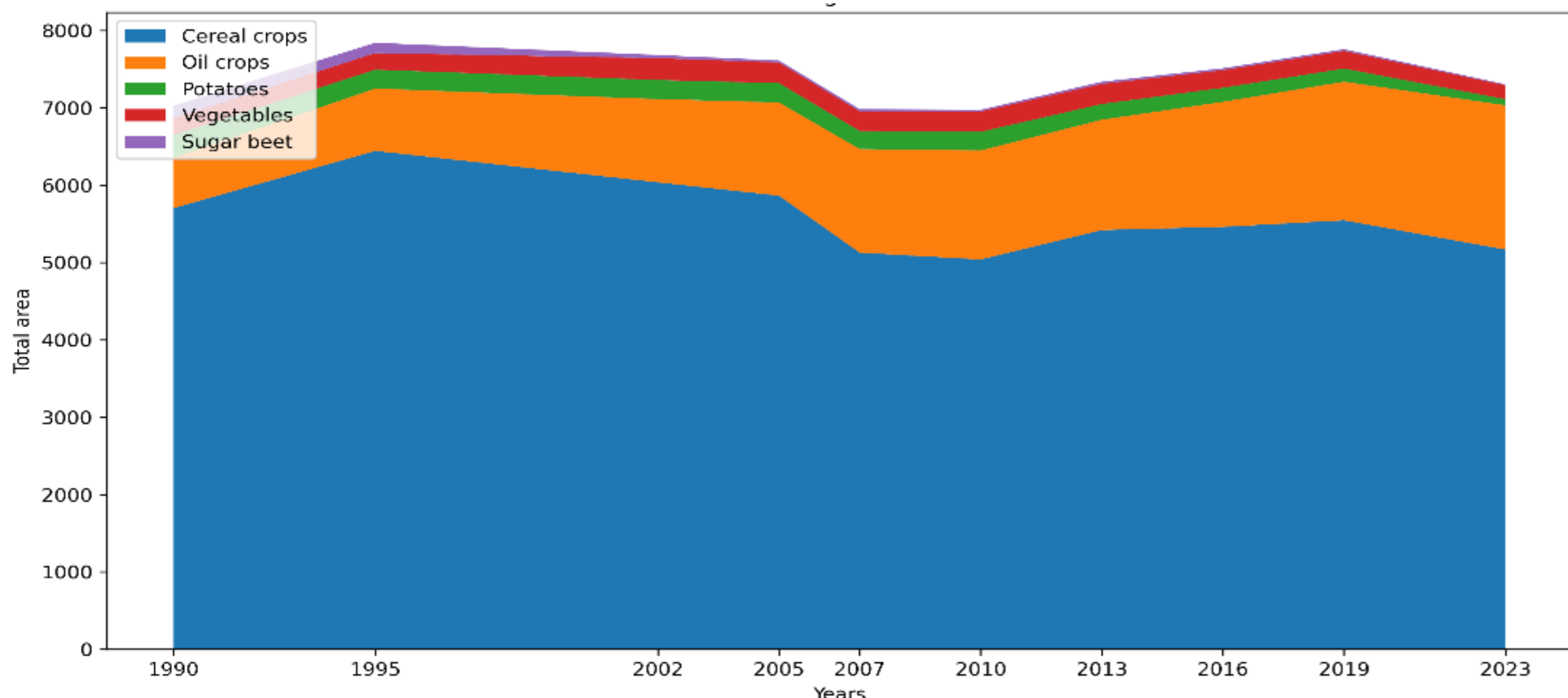


Figure 1 The evolution of agricultural areas (thousands of hectares)

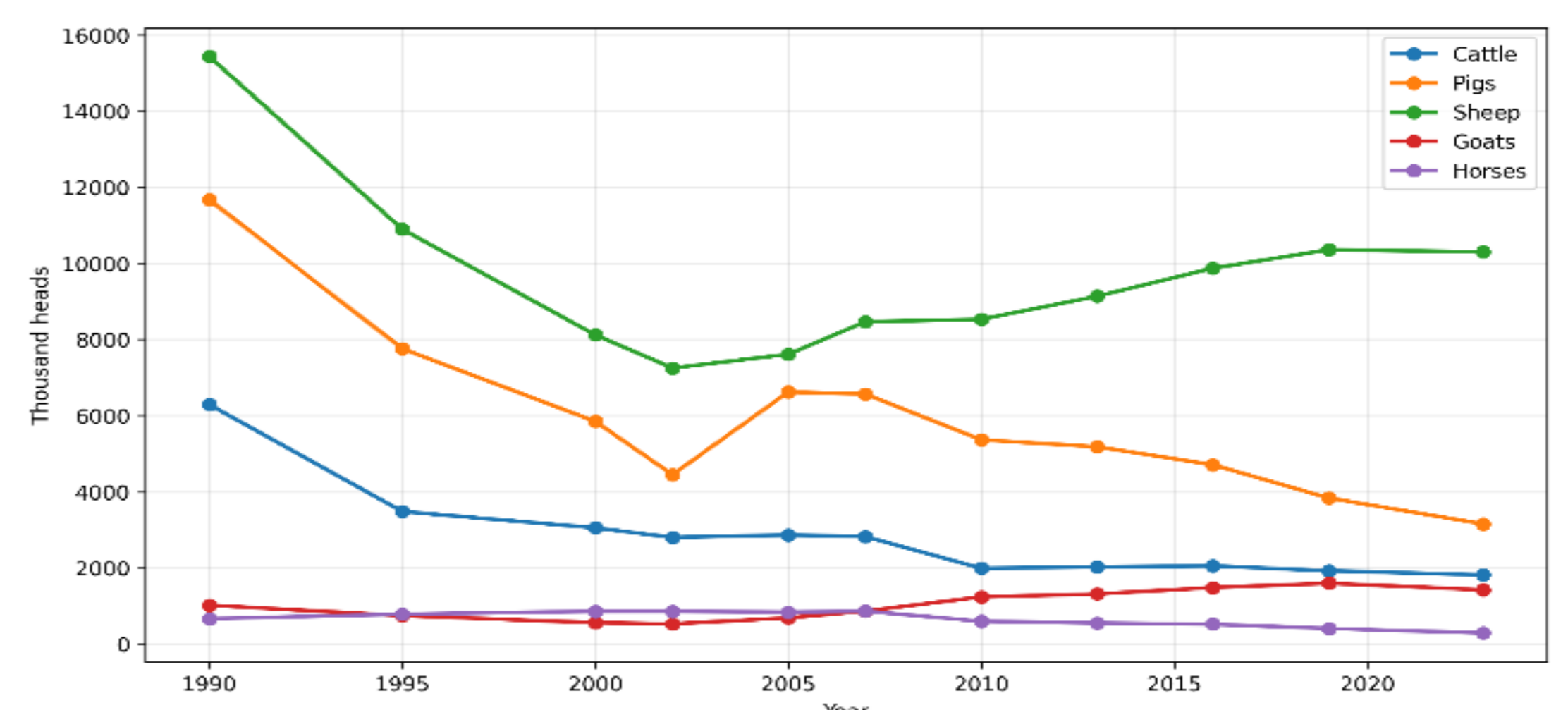


Figure 3 The evolution of livestock population in Romania (thousand heads)

Total cereal production varied significantly between 1990 and 2023, with a marked minimum in 2007 (7,814.8 thousand tons) and an absolute maximum in 2019 (30,412.4 thousand tons) (Figure 2).

➤ Evolution of the production of agricultural goods and services

In 2023, agricultural production of goods and services was dominated by plant production, with 60.3% of the total. Animal production accounted for 37.0% and agricultural services 2.7%. This structure confirms the low share of services and the vulnerability of the livestock sector, but also the central role of vegetable crops in the Romanian agricultural economy (Figure 4).

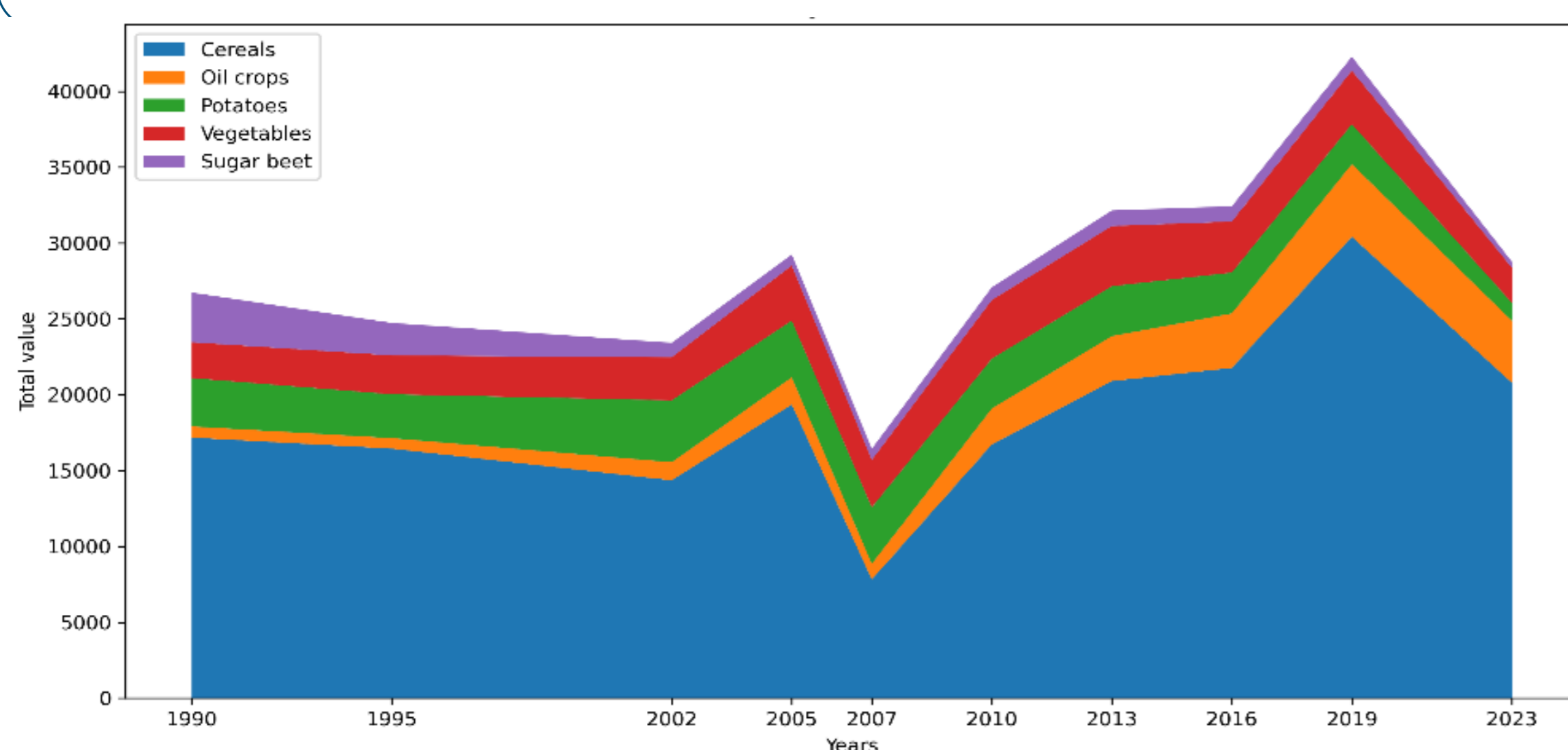


Figure 2 The Evolution of agricultural production (thousands of tons)

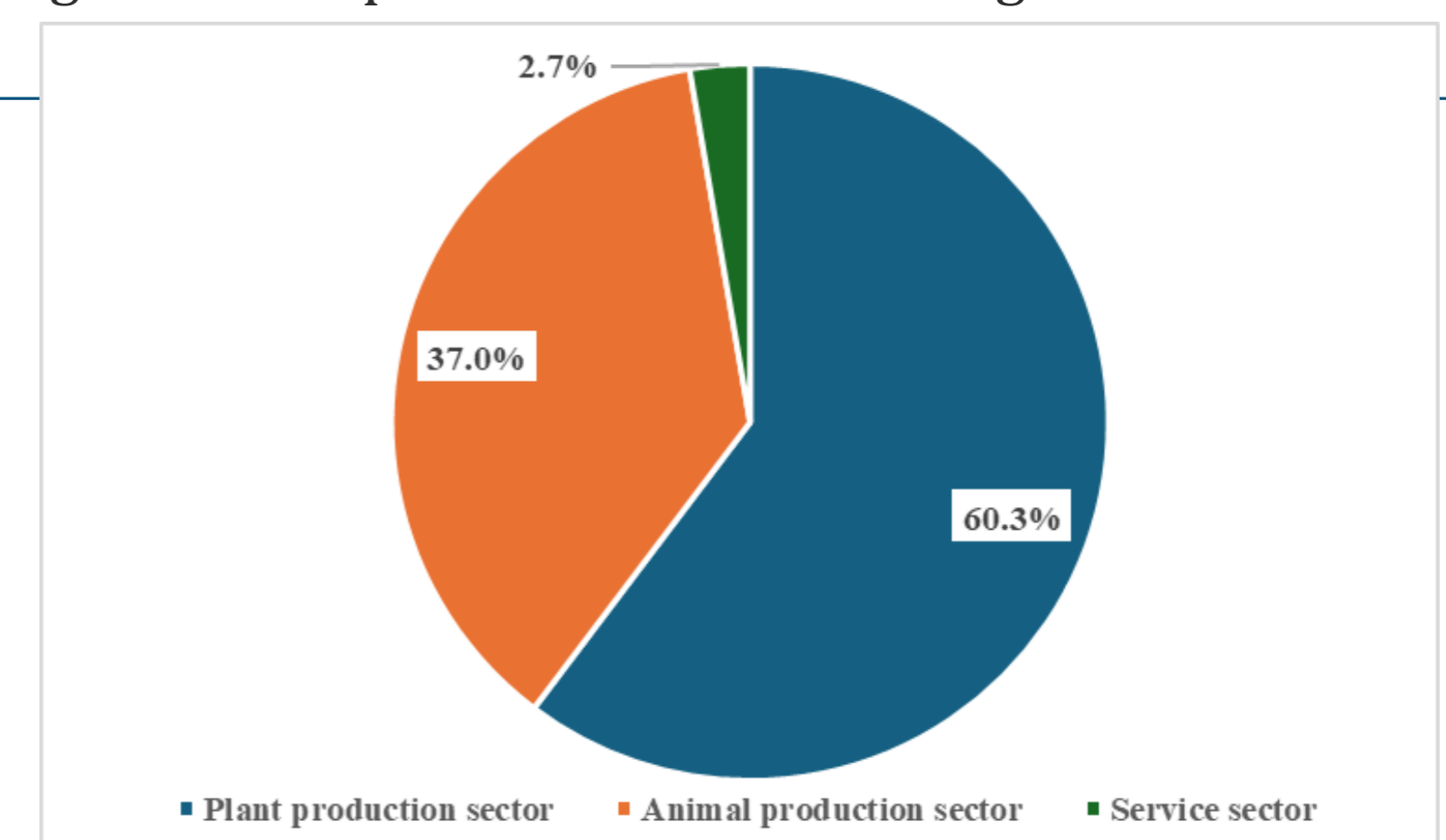


Figure 4 Structure of the Production of Agricultural Goods and Services, 2023

• Conclusions

The analysis of agricultural production in Romania in the period 1990–2023 highlights a series of major structural transformations, characterized by both progress and persistent vulnerabilities:

- the crop sector is predominantly cereals, but is also starting to move towards more profitable crops (oilseeds), but remains exposed to climate risks;
- the livestock sector has registered a major decline, especially in cattle and pigs;
- measures are needed to technologize, digitize, consolidate farms, develop the processing sector and climate risk management tools;
- Coherent long-term agricultural policies are essential to increase the competitiveness of the agri-food sector.